

ILLUSTRATIONS

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OF

THE FRAUD AND FOLLY

OF

HOMŒOPATHY.

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*Quackery carefully conceals the number and extent
of its victims.*

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THE FRAUD AND FOLLY OF HOMŒOPATHY.

A celebrated physician says, that credulity may be defined an unbounded belief in what is possible, although destitute of proof, or even of probability, and that it is a far greater source of error than superstition, because it diffuses itself through the minds of all classes, by which the rank and dignity of science are degraded, its valuable labours confounded with the vain pretensions of empiricism, and ignorance is enabled to claim for itself the prescriptive right of delivering oracles amidst the triumphs of truth, and progress of philosophy. No science has been more cultivated, or made a more rapid advance of late years than the medical art, and no nation has been more infested and disgraced by quacks than England: and the patronage of the aristocracy has always been at their disposal. The latest and most audacious attempt to impose on the human understanding, has been by the introduction of the homœopathic system — a system conceived in ignorance, and fostered by fraud and deceit. Having, since my residence in this place, seen something of homœopathy, and heard more, I offer the following observations, in the hope of disabusing the minds of the credulous, and exposing the fallacy of a practice which is repugnant to common sense, and an insult to the human understanding.

Every man fails in duty due to society, as well as to himself, who suffers falsehood to triumph. It should be

opposed boldly and openly; and if held up, in the firm grasp of truth, to public scorn, cannot escape an ignominious exposure. The candid physician disdains every artifice for his success, and never descends to mean and unworthy arts to raise his importance amongst the ignorant. He must be free, when honor and conscience call for open conduct, to protest against whatever practice he thinks wrong — he must shew himself to be a man of honor, probity, veracity, and real professional learning.

If the doctrines of Hahnemann be true, we must certainly admit, with the author, that although, for thousands of years, it may have escaped recognition, still it must have left in every age, visible traces of its occasional development. But this is denied by Hahneman, who casts to the winds all the labor, study and scientific researches of past ages, and claims for himself a grand discovery for the benefit of the human race. If this be admitted, medical science must have been in a deplorable state of ignorance, until the last sixty years, and passing by, such close and accurate observers of disease as Morgagni, Sydenham, and a host of time-honoured names, who devoted their lives to the study and cultivation of a god-like profession, it was reserved for this great philosopher to illuminate the world by a discovery so wonderfully beneficial to mankind. But it is not probable, that whilst the revival of almost every other improvement, and so-stated new discovery, may be traced to the fathers of medicine, this great boon, which, according to some of the writers of the present day, is so powerful and efficacious in curing diseases, and lessening the amount of human misery, should have been entirely overlooked.

The indefatigable industry, and patient investigation of my friend, Dr. Simpson, has at length brought the researches of the professors of medicine to find out some mode of annulling pain in surgical operations, to a successful issue by

the discovery of chloroform—a discovery which will immortalize his name and transmit it to posterity as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind. But the various attempts which have been made to accomplish this great object, and the partial success which has resulted from experiments, may be traced for centuries back—and where, amongst the ancient writers and cultivators of medicine, is any mention to be found of the extraordinary and startling doctrine of Homœopathy?

Let us examine the cases in which these vaunted cures are reported to have been performed. It is well known that a great proportion of those diseases which fall under the care of the physician, are to be found amongst the nervous and hypochondriac, of which class Galen says “that confidence and hope do more good than physic; and he cures most, who best acquires and maintains, the patient’s stedfast confidence;” and Bacon, “All wise physicians, in their prescriptions and regimens to their patients, do ever consider ‘*Accidentia Animi*’ as of great force to further or hinder remedies or recoveries, and more especially as it is an enquiry of great depth and worth, concerning imagination, how, and how far, it altereth the proper body of the imaginant.”

Every physician of experience must admit the powerful influence of the mind over disease, and remember how many patients he has cured of the “*Malade Imaginaire*,” by bread pills. And do not many of Jephson’s patients owe their recoveries to the same cause? Nor must it be forgotten that the late Mr. Hicks of Bath, pretended to cure a vast number of patients of a disease which is so rare, that many in very extensive practice, never meet with a case during their whole lives, yet they were every day occurrences in his practice, and all cured by the same remedy.

The following extract from *Dr. Paris’s Pharmacologia*, exposes the folly of this practice, thus:—

"But the most absurd and startling part of the story, and that which will assuredly give the rudest shock to the reader's credulity, yet remains to be told: it is the marvellous exiguity of the doses which are required for producing the desired effect. A dose which the English practitioner might give to a suckling, would, in the hands of a disciple of Hahneman, be sufficient to cure the inhabitants of a whole solar system! The millionth part of a grain of many substances, is an ordinary dose; but the reduction proceeds to the billionth, trillionth. Nay, even to the decillionth portion of a grain! Now let us ask whether it has ever occurred to the reader to imagine a quantity represented by a decillion? if not, we will enlighten him upon this point. Suppose, then, that every inhabitant upon the face of the globe were to take this homœopathic dose every second of time, six thousand years must elapse before a single grain could be consumed! But, it will be asked how can so minute a division be practically effected? This question will be most readily answered by giving a specimen of their formulæ:

"Supposing the medicine to belong to the mineral kingdom, one grain of it, if possible, in a pulverised form, is to be mixed with ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk, by rubbing them together in a glass or stone mortar, for the space of an hour. Of this mixture, one grain is in like manner to be rubbed with ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk, so that each grain of this second composition contains only one ten-thousandth part of the original grain of medicine. A third trituration will bring the proportion down to one millionth; a sixth to one billionth; and so on. In the preparation of mercury, one grain of pure running quicksilver is reduced in this manner to the millionth degree; a single grain of the powder thus obtained, is then dissolved in ninety-nine drops of diluted spirits of wine; one drop of which solution is again shaken together with ninety-nine drops of the vinous spirit; and another repetition of this process having reduced the mixture to the billionth degree, a few sugar pellets, of the size of poppy seeds, are moistened with this liquid, whereof two or three constitute a dose! But the deglutition of even these minute particles is not esteemed always needful; in some instances it is only necessary to smell the phial in which the pellets are enclosed. Now the reader will be envious to hear what the homœopathist can possibly adduce in support of so strange a vagary of the imagination. He shall therefore, in a few words, be informed of the process of reasoning by which the value of infinitesimal doses is sought to be established. 'Since, in the treatment of disease, medicines calculated to produce similar effects are alone to be used, these medicines will have to work upon an organization already pre-disposed to be affected by them; and the power of medicine being at any rate more energetic than that of natural sickness, a very small quantity of medicine must be adequate to act upon an organization thus prepared. The slightest aggravation of the disease by medical means, will constitute an artificial malady powerful enough to control and suppress the natural one; and the more slight this artificial malady, the more easily will it, in its turn, give way to the vital principle.'

In the next place, Hahnemann contends that the rubbing and shaking to which the preparations are subjected, not only alter, but develope, in a manner hitherto unknown, the powers of the drugs so treated: so that it is upon the augmented force of the medicines, however reduced in bulk, which results from his method of preparing them, that the founder of this strange system seems inclined to rest his explanation.

But cures have been performed "through these means." True ; but on whom ? On hypochondriacs, who have been drenched for years with physic, and to whom this system has brought a truce ; while it has encouraged their faith, through the medium of the imagination. Some of the members of the 'Academie de Medicine' have finally put this system to the test. Andral tried the system on one hundred and thirty patients, in the presence of the homœopathsists themselves, adopting every care and precaution, yet not in one instance was he successful."

Such men basely take advantage of the fears of timid patients, and anxious parents, by magnifying trifling indispositions into serious diseases, declaring every hoarseness, to be croup, and every pain in the head, inflammation of the brain, and add them to their list of pretended cures with a total disregard of truth.

The late Dr. Parry remarks, "A man shall be grossly ignorant of the whole science of medicine, yet, if he has a certain degree of assurance, aided by an adequate number of fashionable phrases, some speciousness in decorating mystery with a determined resolution of flattering his patients by an appearance of zeal and attachment, and by confirming the good opinion which they entertain of their own discernment in the choice of medicine, and did which they most like -- that man shall grow popular and rich, under the hourly dereliction of every principle of truth, honor, and conscience, and become accessory to the daily destruction of his fellow-creatures. This is the reason why a large party of all ranks is always inclined to favor the most uneducated of the medical profession."

The charlatans of the present day assert, that recognized physicians, suppress the truth, persist in propagating error, and are afraid of the new light by which their doctrine will enlighten the world. A greater calumny could not be uttered.

Love of truth, and the detection and exposure of error, have always been the characteristics of the cultivators of medicine. This, with many other attributes, of which they may justly be proud, has been accorded to them by universal consent. At a public meeting, lately held at Birmingham, to consider the propriety of presenting a testimonial to Mr. Hodgson, for his long and valuable services, Sir Robert Peel, after bearing testimony to the zeal and assiduity of the medical profession, and especially to the kindness and benevolence which characterized them, added, "that he had peculiar pleasure in attending on this occasion, because having had many opportunities of intercourse with the medical profession, he was proud to acknowledge, in as marked a manner as he could, his deep conviction that in no profession could there be found more frequent instances of liberal and dignified sentiment, or more proofs of active and enlightened humanity."

But the very reverse of this charge is true. The homœopathsists well know that by this craft, they have their wealth, and are fully aware that the more closely their practice is examined, the more its worthlessness is displayed and their craft endangered, they dare not come to the light, but content themselves with exclaiming Hahneman is all powerful. Yet, when attacked by disease in their own persons or families, they fly to the recognized practitioner for aid; — a cruelty they would not be guilty of, if they believed their own doctrine.

Contrast the enlightened, modest physician, with the empirical and reckless homœopathist. The former, knowing the difficulties by which his art is surrounded, patiently investigates every obscure symptom: reasons on, and compares them, and, after careful reflection, discriminates between diseases which simulate, and so closely resemble each other in many points, that the nicest judgment is required to arrive at a correct conclusion, which may elude

the detection of a less observant practitioner. The latter boldly cuts the knot he cannot untie, and, after a cursory examination, declares the nature of the complaint, and the necessary treatment. No doubt can exist in the mind of every unprejudiced person, which of the two opinions is best entitled to confidence, or which practice is most likely to lead to a successful result. The empiric, however, has this great and temporary advantage over his more conscientious opponent. He either ignorantly or wilfully mistakes symptoms which do not belong to the disease—unhesitatingly declares its existence, and gives it a formidable name—bids the nervous mother, or timid child, rely on his skill for the successful issue, and thus imposes on the credulous, secure as he is from detection, because he knows, that no man who values his character or reputation will meet him in consultation, and expose his ignorance or fraud.

A remarkable instance of this kind occurred within my own knowledge.

A very nervous lady, in the absence of her husband, who was a man of discreet and calm judgment, became much alarmed about one of her children, and consulted a practitioner who had obtained a reputation for the cure of the disease with which she feared her child was attacked. He declared at once that her fears were well grounded, and that if immediate steps were not taken, serious consequences would ensue. As the plan of treatment involved many difficulties, independent of great expense, she requested time to consult her husband before she consented to so

* A man who possessed sufficient talent to take a lead in the profession, and was, at one time much esteemed, so far forgot his rank and principles as to adopt an irregular course of practice, and became so great a quack and charlatan, that he forfeited the good opinion of those with whom he had been associated. To prop his failing practice he had recourse to arts which at one period of his life, he would have spurned, and published the most exaggerated reports of extraordinary cures—amongst others, hundreds of cases of cancer, and on these precarious supports, wrung from the afflicted and the poor, he eked out a miserable end, and died penniless, and, as a relative admitted with great pain, “without having made a friend of God or man.”—J. T.

severe and protracted a course; but she was unfeelingly told, in the presence of the child, who was of an age to understand, that too much time had already been lost, and that if the plan was not adopted that very day, in six months she would follow him to the grave. In her distress she flew to an old medical friend for advice and comfort, who, after a most patient and careful investigation, was satisfied that no disease at all, existed, and, under his assurance, nothing was done. At the expiration of six months, this poor boy suddenly awoke in the night, crying out, that the disease which had been foretold was coming, that the time had expired, and that he should soon die. On this occasion, I was consulted, and made acquainted with the previous history, and on examining the case, I had no hesitation in confirming the opinion of his former friend. He grew up to manhood, without ever having experienced the slightest symptom of the disease, and remains free to the present hour. Such cases would be continually occurring, if the same judicious course was pursued.

Medical practitioners have been charged with giving encouragement to homœopathy, by over-drugging their patients. That such a system has prevailed cannot be denied, but it has been forced upon them by the refusal to remunerate them for their time, and I believe there is not a respectable practitioner who does not abhor the system, and use his best endeavour to persuade his patients to a different course. The fault, however, is not wholly to be attributed to them. A certain class of persons object to pay for attendance, and will not be satisfied unless they have something to shew for their money, and another class will not believe they can get well without medicine, and consider themselves neglected if they do not have it. There is a difficulty too, in overcoming prejudices and accustomed habits, but as the practice of being paid for time, obtains more generally,

medical men will rejoice to relinquish a course repugnant to their feelings, and pursue the same plan, as in hospitals, where they can practice the principles of their profession without interference, subject their patients to certain rules and diet, and give no unnecessary medicine. Until the general practitioner obtains a more equitable remuneration for his services, than what he can procure by ordering and charging for unnecessary medicine, it is in vain to expect that he will put his patient's interests against his own, and cure him by the happier influence of mental impression.

But the homœopathists give their valueless infinitesimal doses as frequently, and at the same time they take care to exact from their patients larger fees than more deserving men.

I do not believe that the homœopathists, themselves, are so infatuated as to place any confidence in so absurd a practice ; and I imagine that, among their ranks, men will be found who, from defective education, or some such cause, have so signally failed in the profession for which they were originally designed, that they have deserted their ranks, and become converts to a popular delusion from necessity, and not from conviction. Such a confession was once made to me by a hydropath, and I have, since my residence in this place, witnessed, in the presence of another physician, such a lamentable display of ignorance by a homœopath, as to oblige him to appeal (*sad humiliation*) for assistance, to enable him to spell a word of two syllables.

I have witnessed the birth, progress, and death, of Perkins's tractors, animal magnetism, mustard seed, brandy and salt, and various other impositions on the public, and, in all these, time has discovered the cheat, and consigned the impostors to merited contempt and disgrace. A few years only are wanting to complete the destiny of homœopathy. The best proof these soi-disant philosophers and benefactors to mankind can give of their disinterestedness and sincerity, would

be to consent to the apportionment of their fees to the scale of their doses, and I venture to predict, that if they abide this test, there will not be found an homœopathist practising in England in three years.

The fatal example of Malibran, and the recent case of Serjeant Warren, together with the numerous inquests which have been held on the bodies of those, who have fallen victims of the expectant treatment, loudly proclaim the inefficacy of this system in real disease.

The homœopathists point, exultingly, to published reports, to attest the efficacy and superiority of their practice. Let us inquire into the truth of these vaunted statements.

Dr. Balfour, in a letter to Dr. Forbes, makes a statement which he believes, although he cannot positively assert it to be true—"That in the Weissen district hospital, of Vienna, a physician has been treating all his patients with Aqua Colorata only, and being accused of doing so, and therefore threatened with dismissal, has retained his situation by producing his books, and shewing better therapeutic statistics than his colleagues."

I quote the following extract from a lecture delivered at the Torquay Mechanic's Institute, on "Medical Delusions," by Mr. Stewart, "I may now pass on to shew how little
 "reliance can be placed upon the reports of cases by homœ-
 "opathists, whether emanating from public hospitals, or from
 "private individuals, and in doing so I may notice, a work
 "lately published by a homœopathic practitioner* at Brighton
 "(a deserter from the ranks of Allopathy), which in some in-
 "structive passages, clearly displays the dangers which
 "threaten the public from the experiments of incipient homœ-
 "opathists." In page viii. of his preface, Dr. H. Madden says,
 "A sincere and earnest desire to see the practice of medicine
 rescued from its present and unsatisfactory condition, and an

* Dr. Henry Madden.

ardent wish that the sufferings of his fellow-creatures may be more speedily alleviated than heretofore, is the only excuse the author can bring forward for entering into the tide of literature." In his dedication to Dr. Henderson, he professes his obligation to that gentleman, for having led his mind to the examination of that system of practical medicine, which he has now the satisfaction of advocating. And at page 162, "If we desire to impress our allopathic brethren with a deep sense of the importance of homœopathy, we must first command their esteem for ourselves as individuals — we must let them see clearly that we are *lovers of truth*, not mere partisans of system." Again, at page 73 of his treatise, while describing the process of his conversion to homœopathy—"I was in extensive country practice in the neighbourhood of that city (Edinburgh), where I had been settled about four years and half. I thus had peculiar advantages: because, in the first place, I was already possessed of public confidence, so that they were in no case tempted to question me as to what kind of treatment I was pursuing; and, secondly, because I was pretty well acquainted with my patients, and the peculiarity of their constitutions, and could thus more readily detect the power which the remedies possessed of modifying the ordinary course of their complaints. Under these circumstances (he continues) I treated between 300 and 400 patients homœopathically, without any of them having *the least suspicion* that they were being made the subjects of *experiments*. The only question ever asked me and that was pretty frequently put (?) was how I had succeeded in *taking away the taste of my medicines without destroying their power?* Which question I always succeeded in *evading!*" He goes on, a paragraph or two lower down, to say, "A very considerable number of my patients appeared to me as if they were simply let alone, and that the disease was wearing itself out: and on review-

ing my rough notes, I am, indeed, in no way surprised, for I am satisfied, that in my early cases, I administered the *wrong remedy*, in at least one half of those treated.” — *Mr. Stewart's Lecture on Medical Delusions*. On the honesty of pretending to practice one system, while really pursuing another, I leave it to the Brighton Homœopath, with his four hundred confiding and betrayed patients to pronounce.* I am told that this gentleman has seen the error of his ways, and I must say that it would have been but candid, to have renounced them publicly. When a man has adopted erroneous principles, and published his belief, with a view to the conversion of others, the best reparation he can make to society, is to make his recantation of his error as public as he hoped to do by his faith.

But to return to Dr. Balfour. He states, in the *Edinburgh Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, for Feb., 1848, “That he has just obtained a copy of Fleishman's report of Gumpendorf hospital, Vienna, for the year 1846, and he proceeds to collate a few of the statistics there so ostentatiously paraded, with those contained in the above report, for three months, May, June, and July, of the same year.

1st, PNEUMONIA.—All the cases, nineteen in number, in every report, had the diagnosis written in chalk at their bed-head. Three of them died. The details of the section of two are given. The third was not dissected, but from the note given, there can be no doubt of the diagnosis. Of nineteen, therefore, admitted in three months, three died—15 per cent. While according to Fleishmann's report of sixty-four admitted during twelve months, *but two died*—3 per cent.

* The rubbing shoemaker, of Brighton, might exhibit as great a number of cures by his wonderful liniment—the *Oleum Crispinum*.

2nd, INTERMITTENT FEVER.—All the cases are reported by Dr. F. as discharged cured, except two dead at page 576 of my report ; one case is mentioned as having been discharged, not only unimproved but actually worse ; and that case I well remember.

OPHTHALMIA.—One case, page 591, the day after her admission was not to be found. Was she cured of acute catarrhal ophthalmia, in less than twenty-four hours ? All three are reported, by Dr. F., as cured, except one remaining.

I have reported one case of *general dropsy*, and two of pleuritic exudation as having been discharged—the one but slightly, the other not at all improved. Under these heads all are reported cured by Dr. F., except one case of general dropsy, died.”

During the last winter, I became acquainted with Dr. S—, who was residing here, who told me that he knew well Dr. Fleishmann, and his mode of conducting the hospital, of which he had the entire charge. He assured me that he was not responsible to any authority ; that he admitted and discharged whatever patients he chose, and at any time, recommending those whose cases were threatening to remove to their own homes, and that his reports were framed to enhance the value of his system, and were not to be depended on.

The following specimen is a fair example of the veracity of these gentlemen, and of reliance on their published reports, and are in unison with those of Fleishmann and others. I copy it from *Fraser's Magazine*, for June, 1848.

“ Drs. Black and Russell, two highly respectable young physicians, although they were accused of knowing particularly little about the principles of regular medicine, became converts to the doctrines of homœopathy. We may remark, that both these gentlemen are utterly incapable of uttering a falsehood. They introduced their new doctrines into Edinburgh. Among other proceedings to promulgate them, they established a Dispensary, and after the expiration of some time they published a dispensary report, containing details of several very remarkable cures which they thought they had effected by means of homœopathic and infinitesimal doses. One of them we extract. It is as follows—

"DISEASE OF THE WRIST JOINT.—W. H., aged 53, a healthy looking man, applied at the dispensary, February 18. He states that the affection of the wrist commenced two years ago, but can assign no reason for it. He applied to an eminent surgeon, who blistered the part at least twenty times, but with no benefit. After this, he entered the Edinburgh Infirmary, which he left in August, 1841, after having been sixteen weeks under treatment, but the disease increased instead of getting better. The treatment pursued in the hospital was the application of mercurial ointment, from which he was salivated, then poultices and stimulating washes, together with a dose of salts whenever he chose to take them. These means having failed, he was recommended to go to the country, but the disease got no better. He then returned to the hospital, when amputation was advised as the only means. This he refused to submit to and left. He was recommended, by a gentleman to whom he shewed his arm, to apply at this dispensary. The right wrist presented as he himself described it, the appearance of a boiled turnip, much swelled, with the cellular tissue hardened. There are two sinuses which communicate with the joint, the one opening inferiorly, and the other posteriorly. From these there is a copious yellow discharge. Unable to move the wrist, or fix the fingers, any attempt to do so is attended with pain."

"The report then states the medicines employed, and gives occasional notices, from date to date, of the favourable progress of the case. On the 25th of March there is no pain in the joint—is now able to use it a little—can even lift a bucket of water. Sil. (this means the medicine employed). Then the report goes on: Continued to improve, under the use of Sulph. Sil. Hœp. S; and, on the 19th of July, it was pronounced cured. The man went to the harvest, and, up to this date, Nov. 17th, has continued well, engaging daily in his occupation.

Report of Edinburgh Homœopathic Dispensary.

"We beg particular attention, not only to the decided tone of all this narrative, but also to one or two particular statements. The severity of the disease, 'two sinuses communicating with the joint,' is stated. Then the man's previous treatment, 'salivation,' is brought forward, no doubt, as a sneer, with a view of contrasting it with their elegant plan of treatment. Then amputation and mutilation are threatened the poor fellow by regular surgery. This shews that the hospital surgeons thought it a hopeless case. Lastly, he got quite well, went to the harvest, and up to the date of the 17th of November, has continued well, engaging daily in his occupation.

"Strange as it may seem, not one of these assertions turned out, upon inquiry, to have one grain of truth in it.

"Edinburgh not being a large place, and particulars being given of the above case, the eminent surgeon, the initial of the man's name, and the date of his admission and discharge from the infirmary, induced some gentlemen connected with the medical press of Edinburgh, to investigate the matter. It turned out that the case narrated was that of one William Heslop, for a long time a hospital and out-door patient of Dr. Duncan. It also turned out, first, that the two sinuses did not communicate with the joint, and that, moreover, the homœopathic physicians, although they so stoutly asserted such to be the fact, never proved either of them—*i. e.*, never even tried to ascertain whether such was the case or not; secondly, both on the evidence of the man and Dr. Duncan, he never had been salivated; thirdly, Dr. Duncan never thought of amputating the arm, and Heslop stated, that the reason he left the infirmary was a domestic affliction at home; fourthly, to use the language of the writer of the investigation, published in the *Edinburgh Monthly Journal of Medical Science*—"The wrist is not yet cured, and the man never went to the harvest, just because it was not cured." Drs. Black and Russell, very candidly confessed that Heslop was the man, and in excuse for the statement about the salivation, amputation, &c., stated that they understood it so from the patient himself, and that about the cure, that they understood it was so from the dispensary porter."

Any one attentively criticising reports of quackery cases, will find tales like these as plentiful as blackberries.

A still more extraordinary and startling case of the efficacy of homœopathy, has been industriously circulated in this neighbourhood by those from whose station and education, better things might be expected. It is asserted (*mirabile dictu*) that a large splint on the fore leg of a horse, was removed in one night, by administering a single globule.

Numerous examples might be adduced to shew the utter worthlessness, and danger of this absurd practice, but the following, which have fallen under my own observation, ought to serve as beacons to guard the unwary against impostures.

A delicate hypochondriac lady, the mother of a large family, was induced, at the earnest solicitation of female friends, to place herself under the care of a homœopathic practitioner, who promised her a perfect cure if she conformed strictly to his rules and treatment, and stipulated, at the same time, that she must reside for a considerable period near him, in order to obtain the full benefit of his advice. She consented reluctantly to leave her home and family, but under the strongest assurances, that her health would be permanently restored, she yielded to the wishes of her friends. Every direction was scrupulously followed, and the treatment rigidly pursued for ten months, when, finding her expectations disappointed, she became dissatisfied, and returned home, by the advice of the homœopathist, who told her that the place did not agree with her, but that by a change to her own air she would experience all the benefit of his treatment.* Shortly after her return, her usual medical attendant requested me to meet him in consultation, and as

* This is the common practice of these men, but the trick is become very stale.

he suspected, from some of the symptoms, that there might be a stricture of the bowel, to come prepared. I found her in a most distressing state, much emaciated, with total loss of appetite, and such constant pain and tenesmus, as to deprive her almost entirely of sleep. The bowels were habitually costive, but all aperients had been strictly forbidden, as interrupting the cure; consequently, an enormous accumulation had taken place, which had become so firmly impacted as to require mechanical means to remove it, and a persevering attempt, for four hours, her delivery was effected, which to use her own words, was as complete as she had ever experienced for either of her children. Under the use of a mild tonic aperient, she gradually recovered her strength and flesh, and has been, for many years past, in good health.

Here is an instance of heartless cruelty which cannot be too strongly reprobated. A mother of a large family listens to the artful seductions of a specious, but really nonsensical quackery, is prevailed on to leave her home and comforts — subjected to great inconvenience, and pecuniary loss—risks her life for many months, until, at length, she discovers that her confidence has been shamefully abused, and is then dismissed with an impudent falsehood. If such cases were fearlessly exposed, as they ought to be (and they are of daily occurrence) the nervous and credulous would be prevented from becoming the victims of rapacious quacks and unprincipled pretenders.

A patient who had been suffering for some time from obscure symptoms, which led to the suspicion of commencing disease of the spine, accompanied with some obscure swelling of the lower part of the abdomen, was induced by the advice of well-intentioned but injudicious friends, to withdraw from the usual medical attendant, and consult a homœopathic practitioner, who gave confident hope of a

cure, *provided his plan was followed for two years.* The swelling gradually increased in size, and became so large as to occasion much uneasiness in the minds of the friends, but their apprehensions were allayed by the assurance that the charge was nothing more than a solution of the tumour produced by the treatment. After a very considerable lapse of time, other opinions were taken, when the true nature of the case was explained, and was proved to be caries of the vertebræ, complicated with lumbar abscess, which, on being opened, discharged an immense quantity of matter, and was followed by the formation of other abscesses. Such diseases, if detected early, are often checked, and sometimes perfectly cured by appropriate treatment, of which I have witnessed a very remarkable example. §

I have lately been consulted by a patient who has been treated in the same way for three months. The case was declared to be disease of the lungs, and stated to have been ascertained and proved by repeated examinations, but as the promised benefit did not follow the treatment, another practitioner was consulted, who differed entirely from the former as to the nature of the disease, and my opinion was requested in consultation. The case was one of inflammation of the spinal column, accompanied with paralysis of the bladder and lower extremities, and so obvious, that the merest tyro in the profession could not fail to recognize it. It will most probably now terminate fatally. If this disease had been discovered in its early stage (and ordinary skill and discrimination were only required to detect it), and the usual means had been resorted to, experience confirms the opinion, that recovery might have been confidently expected, but having been allowed to progress unchecked, until extensive disorganization has taken place, little hope can be entertained

§ This case is published in the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*.

of a favorable result. Now it is neither uncharitable or unjust to infer that these cases must have been misunderstood, or treated unscientifically, and that too, in defiance of established rules of practice, plainly laid down, for it cannot be suspected that any one professing the medical art would wilfully deceive a patient. Such men lay themselves open to the charge of omission, neglect, or something more unpardonable, and it is for them to determine on which horn of a dilemma they prefer to rest.

The establishment of dispensaries, ostensibly for the relief of the poor, but in reality of the benefit of the reckless adventurers who delude and impose on the public by quackery, forms a part of their system. Such a scheme has been attempted in this town, but with this unique novelty: that every patient is compelled to deposit half-a-crown on admission—not, as may be supposed, to add to the funds, but for the exclusive benefit of the physician. And this is, I believe the only example in the world of such an appropriation of any part of the funds of a medical charity, if such deserves the name. I do not know whether such a practice now exists, but that it did obtain, is quite certain, for on conversing with one of its greatest patrons, on this point, and expressing my astonishment, he not only upheld the practice, but defended it by saying that he thought it quite proper—for the labourer was worthy of his hire.

Dr. Wood, of Edinburgh, illustrates the absurdity of the minute doses of the homœopathists, thus—

“Of such minute division no language can ever give the slightest idea; and though calculations may express it in figures, yet they fail to convey any mental conception of the amount.

“A billionth of moments have not elapsed since the creation of the world, and to produce a deillionth, that number must be multiplied by a million seven separate times.

“The distance between the earth and the sun is ninety-five millions of miles.

“Twenty of the homœopathic globules laid side by side extend to about an inch, so that 158,400,000,000 such globules would reach from the earth to the sun. But when the thirtieth dilution is practised, each grain of the drug, so

Among the rest are "palsies," "great wasting of the body," "eruptions on the skin," "continual shivering," "melancholy sadness," with "abundant weeping," "hatred of those from whom injuries have long ago been received," "irascibilities, and violent rages easily provoked," "desire to laugh," "weakness of memory and excessive forgetfulness,"—"the experimenter blunders in speaking and writing," (perhaps some of these symptoms are blunders);—"falling out of the hair even of the beard," "ulceration of the chin," "loss of appetite: especially for bread," and "repugnance for tobacco-smoke," "warts upon the palms of the hands," &c., &c., &c.

Nutmeg produces "bloody perspiration; a constant flow of factious ideas," "a strong disposition to make a fool of everybody," "idiocy, and madness," "shortness of breath," "contraction of the throat." (Surely nutmeg must be the common diet of the homœopaths themselves.)

But listen to the symptoms produced by camomile tea, and let that suffice to shew the extreme absurdity of the whole imposture. "Catalepsy," "epileptic convulsions," with "retraction of the thumbs," "a disposition to weep, and utter lamentations, with great readiness to take offence," "taciturnity," "repugnance for conversation," "music is so insupportable as to drive to despair," "the tongue moves convulsively," and the head is twisted backwards.

I will not disgust my readers by further quotations of such folly and knavery.

The lovers of novelty need not, however, despair, if their favourite doctrine should, like its predecessors, be consigned to the tomb of the capulets, for Dr. Hermann has provided another pathy, to which he gives the name of isopathy, which is based on the following principle. "Every diseased organ has its remedy in the same organ: thus if you have disease of the liver: eat liver; if a head ache: eat brain; if you

suffer in the bladder or kidneys : nourish yourself on bladder and kidneys. As the organs may not appear very tempting to certain squeamish persons, M. Hermann has made tinctures of them, which his patients take in spoonfuls, under the scientific names of stomachine, cystine, umbria, &c. The work published at Augsburgh, contains fifty cases of radical cures, as well entitled to credit as those published by the homœopathists.

Akin to this is a practice introduced in America, where the treatment of all diseases is determined by the twist of a tetotum, marked with the name of the appropriate remedy — or that of a successful quack, who, after hearing the statement of the patient, retired to his closet to meditate on the case, where he opened a book which contained cures for all diseases, and on whatever remedy his eye fell, that he resolved to try. He is reported to have been called to a patient who had swallowed a pin, which stuck in her throat ; on which occasion he was urged to depart from his usual practice, and do something instantly for the relief of the sufferer. But the Doctor was inexorable, and would not yield to the entreaties of the friends, who were in an agony lest she should be choked before the remedy arrived. But their fears were groundless, for on his return he ordered a hot poultice to be applied to the belly, which being literally done, an involuntary spasmodic action was excited, which ejected the pin, and established the Doctor's fame firmer than ever.

“The sober minded and educated physician does not believe the asserted fortunate results of quackery, because such are in contradistinction to the well ascertained, and undoubted laws of medical science, and because he does not consider those narrating them to be capable of accurate observation, and for the same reason, that the sober minded of the community do not believe in ghosts and apparitions which vulgar and credulous eye-witnesses relate. Medical men who have joined such systems are universally more ignorant of medical principles, who have been addicted to false theory, and who, if they are old enough, have, before they embraced their present erroneous theories, in turn, embraced and rejected others as erroneous. Such people are flighty, and ardently admire every thing with the charm of novelty to recommend it.”

“ If as many learned and cautious men, who have had every opportunity of forming an opinion, believe, and if as many similarly situated, have believed for centuries, that regular medicine possesses the power of prolonging life, of shortening life, of shortening disease, and of alleviating pain—if this we say be true, how cruel is it to deprive those whose lives are in danger, whose strength is prostrated by sickness, or whose bodies are racked by pain of the remedies provided for them ? and yet this is what every system of quackery does.

“ All the facts that have been observed by thousands of intelligent men, for more than two thousand years, are fallacious—all the deductions erroneous. The only judges of truth are some few very ignorant, very enthusiastic, and, to say the best of it, very conceited, and not very honest, or honorable medical men, and their still more ignorant lay admirers.”

Fraser's Magazine.

The Homœopathists have been anxious to impress the public with the belief that Dr. Forbes favoured their doctrine and practice, but they have either greatly mistaken, or wilfully misrepresented him, for he distinctly states, that “ in rejecting homœopathy, he discards what is at once false and bad—useless to the sufferer, and degrading to the physician.”

I believe there are no men who are more desirous of promoting truth, and exposing error, than the Clergy generally. Attached to that body by long and intimate association, by opinion, and principle, and by the nearest and dearest ties of consanguinity, I wish to speak of them with the deepest respect. It is, however, greatly to be lamented, that many are to be found amongst them who not only uphold this absurd and dangerous practice, but encourage it also by their example. What would these men think, if any of our profession were found bold and wicked enough, to denounce the doctrines and writings of a host of eminently pious and learned divines who have devoted their lives to the study of the scriptures ? Would they not be justly considered arrogant, and presumptuous, in endeavouring to persuade others to abandon the faith and doctrines of their forefathers, and adopt that of visionaries and fanatics ? and especially when they set up their wild and crude opinions in opposition to those whose lives have been spent in medita-

tion and study. And yet such do not hesitate to take upon themselves the responsibility of advising in matters of life and death, although they remind their hearers, "that fools rush in where Angels fear to tread." Such injudicious interference, forms no part of a Clergyman's duty; and I question whether any men would be more jealous, or more properly so, if medical men stepped out of their province to persuade their flocks to abandon pastors from whose doctrines and preaching, they had derived so much spiritual instruction and comfort, for the more exciting, more convenient, but less truthful preaching of the wild enthusiast, or ranter.

I shall conclude by a quotation from the same article† from which many extracts have already been made, and which cannot be too strongly impressed on quacks and their supporters.

"On the melancholy disasters produced in this world by quackery, the mourning mother—the curtailed domestic circle—the young widow—the starving orphan, and the like, we will not dwell. We began by saying that the two great causes of quackery are ignorance and presumption. Both are great crimes. A man who is ignorant of that which he ought to know—the ploughman how to make the furrows—the railway driver how to manage his engine—the statesman how to rule (at least in those happy countries where rule is still committed to statesmen), and every one how to conduct himself in that state of life to which he is called, as a man of common sense, of honesty and honor, and as a moralist and a Christian, has deserted a great truth committed to him, and has incurred a deep responsibility. But there is a crime greater than that of ignorance, and that is presumption. A landsman will not venture to steer a ship, nor does a man unacquainted with mechanics, presume to govern an engine, or a locomotive, yet thousands, who know nothing of medicine, rush into the arena of medical strife, as judges—for it is notorious that the grand promoters of various forms of quackery are lay-admirers, busy-bodies, who know nothing of medicine—and we may safely say that those individuals commit more havoc, destroy more human happiness, and crush more of that singular bounty—Human Life—than if every ship in the navy were committed to the mercies of the waves with only lunatics at the helm, or than if every engine in every railway were driven by the wildest of the inhabitants of bedlam. When we think of the conduct of such presumptuous people, let us hope that either their mental constitution is originally so feeble, or that vanity and conceit, have so unconsciously crept upon them, that they are not morally answerable for all the misery, and anguish and woe that they cause."

The extreme absurdity of the homœopathic doctrine, and gross imposition of its practice, is infinitely exceeded by the

† Fraser's Magazine.

publication of the most abominable and scandalous trash, couched in language equally disgusting and obscene, and so totally unfit for the public eye, that the only wonder is that the attention of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, has not been attracted to it, and that some of their works have not been condemned to be burnt by the public functionary appointed for that purpose. The translation of Jahr's Manual of Homœopathic Medicine, by Dr. Laurie, with a preface by Dr. Curie, has just been put into my hands, and I am restrained by a sense of delicacy to the public, only, from giving a specimen of the nauseous description of the symptoms produced by their remedies—and this is the text-book which is placed in the hands of credulous women for the purpose of carrying out a system alike degrading to common sense and morals.

“Quousque tandem abutere *empiric* patientia nostra.”

